



Fourth Sister Zhang Creates Havoc in the Eastern Capital

Citation

Idema, Wilt Lukas. 2012. "Fourth Sister Zhang Creates Havoc in the Eastern Capital." CHINOPERL: Journal of Chinese Oral and Performing Literature 31 (1): 37–112.

Published Version

doi:10.1179/chi.2012.31.1.37

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Draft

Fourth Sister Zhang Creates Havoc in the Eastern Capital

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The basic story of *Fourth Sister Zhang Creates Havoc in the Eastern Capital* (*Zhang Sijie danao Dongjing* 張四姐大鬧東京) is widely known in China and has been adapted, under a bewildering variety of titles, in many local genres of drama and storytelling.¹ The earliest record of this story is found in the notice devoted to the lost *chuanqi* 傳奇 play *A Heavenly Bond* (*Tianyuan ji* 天緣記) in the eighteenth-century *Quhai zongmu tiyao* 曲海總目題要 (Annotated Bibliography of the Sea of Plays).² This notice may be translated as follows:

A Heavenly Bond.

It is [also] called *Displaying Flowers, Fourth Sister Zhang Longs for the Mortal World* (*Baihua Zhang Sijie sifan* 擺花張四姐思凡). It is based on a drum ballad (*guci* 鼓詞) and is absurd and fantastic. But in its disposition of characters and armies, and its description of banners and weapons, fights and confrontations, it is ingenious and original, enjoyable and amazing, so it is well worth watching.

Duan Chengshi 段成式 [–863] in his *Nuogao ji* 諾皋記 [Record of Nuogao] writes: “Old Man Heaven is called Zhang Jian 張堅; his style is Cike 刺渴 and he hails from Yuyang 漁陽.”³ So it is not that there is no reason to say that a daughter of Heaven is surnamed Zhang.

The play may be summarized as follows: Fourth Sister Zhang is a daughter of the Jade Emperor and the Queen-Mother.⁴ She has six elder and younger sisters and lives in the Dipper and Buffalo Palace. In the days of the Humane Ancestor

¹ Yamamoto Noriko 山本範子, “Araburu senjo Zhang Sijie: Kasei hōkan ‘Zhang Sijie danao Dongjing’ o chūshin ni” 荒ぶる仙女張四姐: 河西宝巻“張四姐大鬧東京”を中心に (The Insolent Female Immortal, Fourth Sister Zhang: Centering on the Hexi “precious scroll” *Fourth Sister Zhang Creates Havoc in the Eastern Capital*), *Chūgoku gakushi* 中國學志 19 (2004):23-41, p. 24. “Hexi” (West of the Yellow River) refers to the Western part of the modern province of Gansu.

² Du Yingtao 杜穎陶, ed., *Quhai zongmu tiyao* 曲海總目題要 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1959), *juan* 40, pp. 1859-60. This work was compiled in the first half of the eighteenth century. We do not know the names of the compilers and the version we have today is not complete.

³ On Duan Chengshi’s *Nuogao ji*, a section of his *Yuyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎 (Miscellaneous Morsels from the South Slope of You Mountain), see Carrie L. Reed, *A Tang Miscellany: An Introduction to Yuyang zazu* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001). For a full translation of this item, see Duan Chengshi, *Chinese Chronicles of the Strange: The “Nuogao ji,”* Carrie E. Reed, tr. (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), p. 32.

⁴ At this point a small-character double-column note warns against taking this figure as the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu 西王母).

[Renzong] of the Song dynasty a certain Cui Wenrui 崔文瑞 of the Eastern Capital, an impoverished gentleman, lives in an abandoned temple where he looks after his mother. Fourth Sister and Cui have an immortal affinity, so she descends [to the mortal world] and marries him. Cui suddenly becomes extremely wealthy; his gold and pearls and precious goods cannot be counted. A rich man, Squire Wang [Wang *yuanwai* 王員外], falsely accuses Cui of theft. Commander Zhang 張 accepts Wang's bribes and questions Cui under torture. Fourth Sister then enters the jail to free Cui; she sets all prisoners free and kills Squire Wang. When the commander reports this to the throne, Bao Zheng 包拯 is dispatched to arrest Fourth Sister, but he too is captured. Upon his release he proposes to the emperor to have her subdued by the Generals of the Yang family. But when Yang Wenguang 楊文廣 and Huyan Qing 呼延慶 fight with her, they are both defeated and locked in her soul-catching bottle. [The court] next deploys the five women generals [of the Yang family] Mu Guiying 穆桂英, Third Sister Li [Li Sanniang 李三娘], Princess Chacha [Chacha gongzhu 查查公主], Miss Lanfeng [Lanfeng xiaojie 藍峰小姐], and Princess Prettier than a Flower [Saihua gongzhu 賽花公主], who all can ride on the mist and rise on the clouds, and who can make dust swirl and stones fly! But when they engage her in battle and manifest their supernatural powers they too are all defeated and locked in the soul-catching bottle. Bao Zheng enters hell and also visits the Buddha lands for a comprehensive investigation but nowhere can he ascertain the origins of Fourth Sister. He then arrives at the Southern Gate of Heaven and pays a call on the Old Lord [Laozi], who takes him to memorialize [the matter] to the Jade Emperor. Only when a personnel count is conducted in the Dipper and Buffalo Palace is it discovered that three days ago Fourth Sister descended to the mortal world. [The Jade emperor] thereupon dispatches a team of the Fire Dragon 火龍, Nezha 哪吒 and the Great Sage Equal to Heaven [Sun Wukong 孫悟空] to set off together, and orders them to bring her back to the palace. But when they engage her in battle, they too are utterly defeated. When the case is reported to the Queen-Mother she orders her [Fourth Sister's] six immortal sisters to talk her around and tell her to report to the Jade Emperor. Fourth Sister then has Wenrui and his mother ascend to the sky together with her and both of them attain the fruit of immortality.

The three heavenly treasures that Fourth Sister had stolen and uses are the heaven-piercing cap [*zuantian mao* 鑽天帽]—if you wear it you can freely move through all thirty-three heavens; the earth-entering shoes [*rudi xie* 入地鞋]—if you wear those you can freely come and go through the eighteen hells; and the soul-catching bottle [*shehun ping* 攝魂瓶]—if you use it, all celestial gods and heavenly generals are sucked inside! The story very much resembles *Journey to the West* [*Xiyou ji* 西游記] and *Creation of the Gods* [*Fengshen yanyi* 封神演義]. But in each scene the immortal maiden appears in full armor, and this is something which is not found in other plays.

It will be clear from the summary presented here that the story of Fourth Sister Zhang Creating Havoc in the Eastern Capital in its modern shape must have appeared very late, at a stage when the legends of Judge Bao,⁵ the Generals of the Yang family, and many others had already been fully developed. But the origin of the tale can be traced a long way back. The editorial notes following this entry in the *Quhai zongmu tiyao* draw attention to the Tang-dynasty tale “Guo Han 郭翰,” in which the student of that name receives nightly visits from the Weaving Maiden (who is often identified as the eldest of the seven celestial sisters).⁶ The same notes also mention the tale of Wei Andao 韋安道, whose lover Lady Earth (Houtu furen 后土夫人) defeats all gods and demons dispatched against her.⁷ The most direct source for the story of Fourth Sister Zhang, however, is probably the Tang dynasty tale “Student Cui” (Cui shusheng 崔書生) from Niu Sengru’s 牛僧孺 (780-848) *Xuanguai lu* 玄怪錄 (Record of Dark and Strange Things).⁸ In this story Student Cui draws the attention of a beautiful maiden because of the flowers he grows and makes her his wife. But his mother grows suspicious because of her extraordinary beauty, whereupon she decides to leave. The present she gives him at her departure, however, makes his fortune as he is able to sell it for millions to a foreign monk who also informs him that his wife was none other than the third daughter of the Queen-Mother of the West. In the modern versions of the legend of Fourth Sister Zhang the immortal maiden also makes her husband a very wealthy man, but already during their married life. One of the magical objects she brings with her from heaven in many versions of the legend is a “tree” that produces cash when shaken (*yaoqian shu* 搖錢樹). Some of these versions are named after this object.⁹

Tang students need little encouragement to sleep with the immortal maidens who offer themselves to them, but we also find examples of more reluctant lovers. In later centuries we encounter the motif of the amorous maiden who has to use all her magical powers in order to overcome the resistance of the young man she has set her mind on. If her actions are caused by lust and result in the birth of a baby, she will later be

⁵ Yamamoto, “Araburu senjo,” pp. 29-36, discusses at length the image of the fallible Judge Bao that is encountered in this tale.

⁶ For this story, see Li Fang 李昉, ed., *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Broad Gleanings of the Taiping Era; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), *juan* 68, pp. 420-21. The *Taiping Guangji* quotes the story from the *Lingguai ji* 靈怪集 (Record of Mysterious Miracles) by Zhang Jian 張薦 (774-804). For a recent English translation of this tale see Wilt L. Idema, *Filial Piety and Its Divine Rewards: The Legend of Dong Yong and Weaving Maiden with Related Texts* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2009), pp. 83-86.

⁷ Li Fang, ed., *Taiping guangji*, *juan* 299, pp. 2375-79. The *Taiping guangji* lists the *Yiwen lu* 異聞錄 (A Record of Strange Things Heard) as its source.

⁸ *Taiping guangji*, *juan* 63, pp. 392-394. See also Niu Sengru 牛僧孺 and Li Fuyan 李復言, *Xuanguai lu*, *Xu Xuanguai lu* 玄怪錄, 續玄怪錄 (Record of Dark and Strange Things and A Continuation of Record of Dark and Strange Things), Jiang Yun 姜雲 and Song Ping 宋平, annot. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1985), pp. 43-46.

⁹ On the “real” *yaoqian shu* and the role of such items in popular literature, see Jiang Yuxiang 江玉祥, “Guanyu kaogu chutu de ‘yaoqian shu’ yanjiu zhong de jige wenti” 關於考古出土的‘搖錢樹’研究中的幾個問題 (Several Questions Concerning the Study of Archaeologically-Discovered “Shake-Out Money Trees”), *Sichuan wenwu* 四川文物 (Sichuan Cultural Objects) 2000.4: 10-13.

imprisoned and it will be up to her son to eventually liberate her.¹⁰ If the immortal maiden is attracted to the young man not because of his handsome features but because of his high moral standards, preferably his great filial piety, she will be able to escape being jailed in the prisons of earth, but she still will meet with stiff opposition. Instead of battles that result in her capture and her son's battles to free her, we now have battles waged by our heroine to save her husband. In her loyalty to her filial husband the wife defeats all mortal and celestial opponents and eventually is able to take her husband and his mother with her to heaven where they will all enjoy eternal bliss.¹¹ The immortal maiden is only completely free of blame if she has been ordered to descend to the mortal world, as in the legend of Dong Yong 董永.¹²

The version of the story of Fourth Sister Zhang Creating Havoc in the Eastern Capital translated here is a precious scroll (*baojuan* 寶卷)¹³ from Western Gansu. In the 1980s it became clear that local traditions of precious scroll recitation in many of the remote areas of Western Gansu had survived the Cultural Revolution rather well.¹⁴ Few of the scholars who have since published on the subject have failed to mention the popularity of the story of Fourth Sister Zhang, which circulated in a number of versions.

¹⁰ This is the outline of the legend of Chenxiang 沉香. For a study of this legend, see Glen Dudbridge, "The Goddess Hua-yüeh San-niang and the Cantonese Ballad *Ch'en-hsiang T'ai-tzu*," *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 (Chinese Studies) 8.1 (1990): 627-46. For the impact of this pattern on other tales of sons saving their mother from imprisonment, see Wilt L. Idema, *The White Snake and Her Son: A Translation of The Precious Scroll of Thunder Peak with Related Texts* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2009), pp. xvi-xxi. For a full translation of the *Precious Scroll of Chenxiang* (*Chenxiang baojuan* 沉香寶卷) by Wilt L. Idema, see Victor H. Mair and Mark Bender, eds., *The Columbia Anthology of Chinese Folk and Popular Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), pp. 380-405.

¹¹ Yamamoto, "Araburu senjo," p. 26, notes that in some genres of regional opera Fourth Sister Zhang is eventually imprisoned by Yang Erlang 楊二郎, and interprets this as a sign of the influence of the legend of Chenxiang.

¹² For the legend of Dong Yong see Wilt L. Idema, *Filial Piety and Its Divine Reward* and the Chinese scholarship listed in the bibliography.

¹³ Precious scrolls can be traced back at least to the Yuan dynasty. The earliest precious scrolls are Buddhist prosimetric narratives and ritual texts. From the Ming dynasty onward the term was also used in reference to sectarian scriptures. From the eighteenth century onward the genre broadened its subject matter and could include almost any traditional story but continued to have religious functions nonetheless. See Daniel L. Overmyer, *Precious Volumes: An Introduction to Chinese Sectarian Scriptures from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999). See also Wilt L. Idema, "Prosimetric and Verse Narrative," in Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen, eds., *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, 2 Vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2: 350-54 and 399-401. For an introduction to English-language scholarship on *baojuan*, see my research note on this topic in this volume.

¹⁴ For a concise summary of Chinese scholarship in this field, see Xun Fang 鄒芳, "Hexi baojuan yanjiu huigu" 河西寶卷研究回顧 (A Retrospective Look at the Scholarship on Hexi Precious Scrolls), *Dang'an* (Archives) 2010.1: 35-37. For a list of published and as yet unpublished precious scrolls from Western Gansu, see Wang Wenren 王文仁, "Hexi baojuan zongmu diaocha" 河西寶卷總目調查 (A Survey and Bibliography of Hexi Precious Scrolls), *Minsu wenhua* 民俗文化 (Folk Culture) 2010.12: 38-40. One of the earliest Western-language publications to draw attention to the precious scrolls of Western Gansu was Victor H. Mair, *Painting and Performance: Chinese Picture Recitation and Its Indian Genesis* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1988), pp. 9-13. See also Wei Chiao, "Folk Literature and Popular Beliefs in the Ho-hsi Corridor (Kansu Province)," in *Minjan xinyang yu Zhongguo wenhua guoji yantao hui lunwen ji* 民間信仰與中國文化國際研討會論文集 (Collected Essays from the International Conference on Folk Belief and Chinese Culture; Taipei: Hanxue yanjiu zhongxin, 1994), pp. 181-200.

Fourth Sister Zhang is greatly praised for her daring in leaving heaven, her fidelity to her husband, and her brazen defiance of all earthly and heavenly authorities.¹⁵ This translation is based on the text included in one of the earliest monographs on this material, Fang Buhe 方步和, ed., *Hexi baojuan zhenben jiaozhu yanjiu* 河西寶卷真本校註研究 (Studies and Collation and Annotation of Authentic Copies of Hexi Precious Scrolls) of 1992.¹⁶ The text is described as having been “collected” (*souji* 搜集) by a Feng Qiang 馮強 from a copy (or copies) made (*tengchao* 謄抄) by a Wang Bin 王斌, Cai Zhengxue 蔡正學, and Xu Zhude 徐祝德 of the village of Zhangyibao 張義堡 in Wuwei 武威.¹⁷ A different text is included in *Jiuquan baojuan (shangbian)* 酒泉寶卷 (上編) (Jiuquan Precious Scrolls [First Collection]).¹⁸ This latter text is based on a manuscript made in 1943 by the local peasant Tian Shanghai 田上海 in Dongdong 東洞 Village in Jiuquan. The story line in both texts is roughly the same, but whereas the second text primarily relies on seven-syllable lines in its verse sections, the text translated here mostly employs ten-syllable lines and would appear to be somewhat less literary in character. In the main body of the narrative the sections in ten-syllable verse are followed by a short passage in prose, which in turn is concluded by a couplet or quatrain.¹⁹

As noted above, in the Tang dynasty classical story “Student Cui,” it was Third Sister who became the lover of Cui Wenrui. There also exists a Gansu precious scroll in which Third Sister is the protagonist rather than Fourth Sister.²⁰ But in that version Third Sister’s longing for the mortal world is inspired by Fourth Sister’s adventures. She goes to Guanzhou 貫州, where she marries Yan Tianyou 閻天佑. When her husband is

¹⁵ See for instance Liu Yonghong 劉永紅, “Eryuan duili yu kanghuan: Hexi bojuan zhong de nüxing renlei xue jiedu” 二元對立與狂歡: 河西寶卷中的女性人類學解讀 (Dualism and Ecstasy: An Anthropological Reading of the Female Characters in Hexi Precious Scrolls), *Qinghai shifan daxue minzu xueyuan xuebao* 青海師範大學民族學院學報 (Journal of Qinghai Normal Ethnic Nationality College) 2011.5: 18-21.

¹⁶ Lanzhou: Lanzhou daxue, 1992, pp. 127-164. This same text is also included in He Denghuan 何登煥 ed., *Yongchang baojuan* 永昌寶卷 (Yongchang Precious Scrolls; Yongchang: Yongchangxian wenhua ju, 2003), pp. 77-96; Xu Yongcheng 徐永成, ed., *Jin Zhangye minjian baojuan* 金張掖民間寶卷 (Golden Zhangye Popular Precious Scrolls; Lanzhou: Gansu wenhua, 2007), pp. 41-59; and Zhang Xu 張旭, ed., *Shandan baojuan* 山丹寶卷 (Shandan Precious Scrolls; Lanzhou: Gansu wenhua, 2007), pp. 274-90.

¹⁷ See the parenthetical note at the end of the text in *Hexi baojuan zhenben jiaozhu yanjiu*, pp. 159-60.

¹⁸ Lanzhou: Gansu renmin, 1991, pp. 307-35. A revised version of this collection was included as the first volume in a more extensive set of three volumes, also called *Jiuquan baojuan* and published in 2001 by the Cultural Bureau (Wenhua guan 文化館) of the City of Jiuquan.

¹⁹ Yamamoto, “Araburu senjo,” p. 24, lists ten different titles used for *baojuan* versions of the Fourth Sister Zhang story. Besides the Jiuquan version mentioned above, two other *baojuan* versions of the Fourth Sister Zhang story using seven-syllable verse have been reproduced. A manuscript titled *Nao Dongjing* 鬧東京 (Creating Havoc in the Eastern Capital) copied by a “Guanqun” 冠群 in a *dingsi* 丁巳 year (1857? 1917?) is photographically reproduced in *Baojuan chuji* 寶卷初集 (First Collection of Precious Scrolls), 40 vols. (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin, 1994), 35: 379-470 and in *Minjian baojuan* 民間寶卷 (Popular Precious Scrolls), 20 vols. (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2005), 20: 301-24, and a manuscript titled *Tianxian baojuan* 天仙寶卷 (Precious Scroll of the Heavenly Immortal) copied by Xu Jinzhai 許錦齋 in 1905 is photographically reproduced in the same volume, pp. 325-50 (divided in two *juan*, see the cover of the second *juan*, p. 337, for the date).

²⁰ See, for instance, *San sheng xiafan baojuan* 三神姑下凡寶卷 (Precious Scroll of Third Sister Immortal Descending to the Mortal World), in Xu Yongcheng 徐永成, ed. *Jin Zhangye minjian baojuan*, pp. 147-61.

arrested, she not only defeats all government troops sent against her, but also all heavenly deities, including Sun Wukong. In the end she returns to heaven with her husband.

Precious Scroll of Fourth Sister Zhang Creating Havoc in the Eastern Capital

Now this precious scroll of Fourth Sister has been opened,
 May Her Majesty the Queen-Mother descend from heaven!
 May divine beings such as gods and dragons, filled with joy,
 Protect the common people, safeguard them from disaster!
 May you, good men and pious women seated on both sides,
 Prick up your ears to listen and remember this in your heart!

May each of you act in accordance with this precious scroll;
 Practice many good deeds and be free from evil in your heart:
 If you practice good deeds, you will be loved by all people;
 If you commit evil deeds, your body will be burned to cinders.
 So I have made this scroll that may bring a smile to your face,
 And leave it behind in this world for people's entertainment.

Now tell that this precious scroll took place during the reign of the Humane Emperor of the Song dynasty. In those days the winds and rains were moderate and timely, the state was prosperous and the people were settled. In the city of Bianliang, the Eastern Capital, there lived a student named Cui Wenrui. His father Squire Cui had been powerful and rich—his mules and horses formed herds, and he had plenty of gold and silver. But after his father passed away, the family had unfortunately been struck by lightning and their house and treasures had all been turned to ashes. Mother and son now had to rely on begging in order to survive, and at night they stayed in an old temple. Once the friends who had been so close to them in earlier days saw that Wenrui had been reduced to these circumstances, they promptly kept their distance.

(Ten-syllable tune)²¹

Cui Wenrui

Was originally

A golden lad²² who had come down to earth;

When he had descended to this world,

He had become a student

Who made a living by selling his writing.

His mother had been

A daughter of the Wang family,

But now she was old and bereft of energy;

²¹ Each of these lines has ten characters and scan into phrases of three, three, and four characters. To show this structure, they have been translated so that each line has three phrases.

²² Golden lads (*jintong* 金童), together with jade girls (*yunü* 玉女) were attendants in heaven. There are many tales in which they are incarnated and fall in love with each other in the mortal world.

Her eyes were hazy,
 Her ears were deaf,
 And she lacked the strength to move about.
 So Cui Wenrui
 Would each day
 Beg for food going from street to street;
 When he had begged a bowlful,
 He would save the larger half
 To offer up to his mother for her support.
 Each and every day
 He didn't even get
 Half a bowl of rice or half a bowl of noodles;
 Mother and son,
 Bereft of food and clothes,
 Found it hard to bear such hunger and cold!

Now tell that Wenrui supported his mother by his begging and suffered greatly in this way—but no more of this. Instead tell that the fourth daughter of His Majesty the Jade Emperor, who was called Fourth Sister Zhang, one day, when she was sitting in the Palace of Dipper and Buffalo, suddenly noticed a burst of evil ether rising up to heaven. When she computed its causes on her fingers, she realized that a golden lad was in trouble, serving out his punishment in the mortal world. Unconsciously her feelings were moved: “Why don't I borrow the “ocean-fixing” treasures²³ of the Third Prince of the Dragon King of the Eastern Ocean? On the one hand, I can save that golden lad. On the other hand, I can become man and wife with him!” When she had reached this conclusion, she promptly descended to the mortal world and arrived in the Eastern Capital. Indeed:

 Holding her hairpin of gold she displayed her magical powers:
 The jade maiden wanted to become the wife of that golden lad.

Fourth Sister Zhang
 Saw in the mortal realm
 An ether of suffering that did not disperse,
 So she borrowed treasures
 And without any thought for herself
 Descended from the heavenly palaces.
 In the blink of an eye
 She had quickly passed through
 The three gates that guard heaven's entrance,
 And within an hour
 She had arrived
 In the Eastern Capital Bianliang.
 Upon her arrival
 She promptly met

²³ *Zhenhai bao* 鎮海寶. The enormously heavy staff that Sun Wukong gets from the Dragon King is also referred to as such a treasure.

Face to face with that student Cui Wenrui,
 And softly said:
 "Dear Mr. Cui
 What makes you so worried and sad?"
 Cui Wenrui
 Then walked up to her
 And turning the question around he said:
 "I am a man
 And you are a woman—
 What is your reason for asking this question?"
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Then began to speak
 And again said "Dear Mr. Cui,
 Where do you live?
 Where are you from?
 Tell me your background in detail!
 What is your surname?
 What is your own name?
 Please tell it clearly to me.
 What kind of event
 Did you encounter
 That you now make a living by begging?"
 When Cui Wenrui
 Had heard these words
 He said to her: "Young lady,
 I will for you
 In great detail
 Completely recount the facts.
 Our home was here
 In the Eastern Capital
 In a little lane named after our family.
 My father was
 Squire Cui
 A man advanced in years and bent by age;
 My mother is
 A daughter of the Wangs
 A woman of wisdom and virtue.
 Above me no elder brothers
 Below me no younger brothers
 I am the only child that was born to them.
 Remembering back then
 When my father was still alive
 Our family was powerful and wealthy,
 But upon his death
 The house was struck by lightning:
 Everything was completely burned to ashes!

This left us
 My mother and me
 At a loss how to survive from day to day,
 So I go out onto the streets
 Begging for food to eat
 To take care of my mother.”
 When Fourth Sister Zhang
 Had heard these words
 Tears gushed from her eyes like rain,
 And she cried out:
 “Old man heaven
 How can you so torture my darling!”

Now tell that Fourth Sister upon hearing this was awash in tears. She then asked Wenrui: “Do you have a wife?” Wenrui replied: “We are so poor! How could I be able to take a wife? And besides, who would be willing to live with me?” Fourth Sister said: “There is something I want to tell you. Whether or not it works out, please don’t be upset. Since you do not have a wife, if you do not despise my big feet and ugly face, I would be happy to become your wife. What, sir, do you think of that proposal?” Upon hearing this Wenrui promptly replied: “Young lady, I don’t have a single furrow of land and not a single room to live in. My mother and I survive by begging, so how could I support a wife? This is absolutely impossible. Young lady, please leave me alone.” Fourth daughter addressed him, smiling coldly, in the following words: “I treated you with completely pure intentions, but look how lacking in feeling is your response. In truth,

 My sincere heart I placed in the bright moon,
 But who knew the moon would end up in a ditch.

If you really are going to reject me, I will make it so that you will not be able to separate heaven from earth and will be unable to distinguish east from west, or north from south!” As she was speaking, all you could see was Fourth Sister move one finger, and Cui Wenrui immediately lost all consciousness.

Cui was unconscious for a while, and when he came to Fourth Sister Zhang had disappeared. Groping his way he then left the city to find his mother. But for no reason that he knew of, his whole body was racked by pain and his four limbs were bereft of strength, and he found it very difficult to go any further. Seeing an abandoned kiln in front of him he crawled inside to get some rest. But suddenly he remembered that his mother had not had any rice to eat the entire day and that he had no idea how she was doing, so involuntarily tears fell from his eyes. How heart-rending! Indeed:

 Fourth Sister Zhang had put a spell on Cui Wenrui:
 His body was so racked by pain—he found no peace.

Fourth Sister Zhang
 Was in origin
 A girl from the heavenly palace,

And she scared
 Cui Wenrui so much
 That he had no idea of east or west.
 His whole body was hurting
 He lacked all strength
 And found it impossible to move;
 At a loss what to do
 He could only
 Lie down in a dilapidated kiln.
 His old mother
 In the old temple
 Waited throughout the day:
 From early morning
 Till the setting sun
 She did not see him come back.
 So hungry that
 She lacked all strength
 Her eyes were hazy and her ears were deaf!
 Who could have known
 That Fourth Sister Zhang
 Had put a spell on her darling son?
 Cui Wenrui
 Had clearly said
 He was off to beg food for his mother;
 Who could have known
 That in the midst of calm
 Threatening waves would swell up?
 In such cold that
 Old mother of his—
 How could she possibly sleep!
 When he thought about this
 He who was her son
 Felt extremely disconsolate indeed!
 “If I had known
 That she was not
 A girl from the mortal world,
 I would not have
 Refused her offer
 When she proposed this marriage.
 Now she deliberately
 Has arranged for me
 To suffer these trials and ordeals,
 But could it be
 She’d want my mother
 To really die of starvation?”
 Mother longed for son

Son longed for mother
 Their innards were torn by weeping,
 They had no choice
 That very night
 But to cry through all five watches.²⁴

(Five Watches Tune)

In the first watch, how pained at heart,
 Wenrui all alone in a dilapidated kiln.
 Mother in the west, son in the east,
 The whole day without any resources.
 Oh my Heaven!
 How bitter and hard the five watches are today!

In the second watch, how alarmed at heart,
 Rejecting the marriage made her so angry.
 My head dizzy, my eyes hazy,
 I fall and get up but cannot walk.
 Oh my Heaven!
 This hunger in my belly is impossible to bear!

In the third watch, how sour at heart,
 Forced to find shelter in a dilapidated kiln.
 Weeping I fall to the ground but the tears don't stop,
 I can only wait for dawn to leave this dilapidated kiln.
 Oh my Heaven!
 I entrust my life and my fate to Heaven!

In the fourth watch, how broken at heart,
 Suddenly in a dream I am back home again.
 My white-haired old mother is seated in the hall,
 Seeing my old mother I lament the injustice of it all.
 Oh my Heaven!
 Lacking in clothes but also without food!

In the fifth watch, how pained in feeling,
 Of each ten inches of gut nine inches are empty.
 My eyes are hurting and my head feels so heavy,
 When I struggle to my feet I cannot move a step.
 Oh my Heaven!
 Just thinking of this really breaks my heart!

Now tell that when Cui Wenrui was bitterly weeping in that dilapidated kiln, he suddenly heard the crowing roosters, knew it was dawn, and left that kiln in a hurry to go

²⁴ In traditional China the night was divided in five watches of equal duration. Songs organized in five stanzas according to the five watches of the night were popular all through China.

and see his old mother—but enough of that. Instead tell that Fourth Sister Zhang had been waiting for Wenrui outside the kiln, and when she now saw him come out in great haste, she promptly stepped forward and said: “Sir, I’ve made you suffer!” As soon as Wenrui saw her, how panicked he was, but Fourth Sister hastily addressed him again, saying: “If you accept my proposal, and you and I become a couple, I promise you that you will forever be free from disaster and enjoy every kind of luxury and status. You and I as husband and wife will take care of your mother so she will never again suffer deprivation.” Wenrui replied: “Since things have come to this pass, I can do little else. But my mother is still alive, so we have to go back home and discuss this matter with her.”

Once Fourth Sister heard this, her heart was secretly filled with joy, and together with Wenrui came to the old temple. After they had exchanged salutations, his mother asked him: “Whose family is this girl, and what is she doing here?” Wenrui told her what had happened to him after he had left her. His mother then asked Fourth Sister: “Where is your home and what is your name?” Indeed:

“When I tell you the situation of my family,
My heart’s feelings are tangled like hemp.”

“My mother gave birth to four daughters;
I am the youngest so I am number four.
In a year of famine we met with disaster;
Fleeing from famine we came to this place.

Today I had the good fortune of meeting your son;
The two of us ran into each other in the world of men.
It was a good karmic bond that brought us together,
So today I can become the wife of this young student.”

Hearing these words his mother was filled with joy:

“How truly smart and intelligent a person!
As my son’s mother I happily agree to this marriage,
But alas, our family suffers poverty and deprivation.”

Hearing these words Fourth Sister was filled with joy;
With a restrained smile on her face she disclosed the truth:

“Dear mother, once I am your daughter-in-law,
You’ll never have to depend on others for clothes or food!”

From the bosom of her robe she took out four treasures
And handed them to her mother-in-law to seal the match.
The bed-curtains and the golden hooks were all new;
Incense and wax candles were also bought.
And because this day was a propitious day,
They were married then and there in the old temple.

First the couple bowed to Heaven, and then to Earth;
Next they bowed to express their thanks to his mother.
Husband and wife wished each other a very long life,
They raised a cup of wine to celebrate the wedding.

Husband and wife shared the same couch together:

One night as husband and wife establishes a life-long bond!
 Heaven granted the wishes of men and made them a couple:
 Filled with joy and pleasure they passed the hours!²⁵

Now tell that these two consummated their marriage. At dawn the next day, they once again bowed to his mother, and she was filled with joy. Fourth Sister said: "This old temple is not a place to stay forever. What was the original dwelling of your family? Why not move back there again?" Wenrui replied: "Our family used to live in Eastern Lane, but unfortunately the house was struck by lightning two years ago, and not a single tile remains. All that is left is an empty field, so how could we move there?" When Fourth Sister heard that, she produced a treasure which she handed to her husband, saying: "This is a priceless treasure. It is called a "shake-out-money tree." Shake out some silver and go buy timber and tiles and hire craftsmen to construct courtyards in front and high rooms in back so as to completely change the way you live." Hearing this, he took the shake-out-money tree from her hands, and once he had shaken some silver from it, he went out to go and hire some craftsmen. Indeed:

Today Wenrui is going to renew his family's fortunes,
 So he goes out to hire the necessary craftsmen.

Now Cui Wenrui
 Had silver in his hands
 His heart was filled with joy,
 And in great haste
 He went out the gate
 To hire all kinds of craftsmen.
 In the eastern part of the city
 He bought a number of
 Serving women to serve inside;
 In the western part of the city
 He hired a number of
 Craftsmen for every kind of job.
 Within an hour
 He had assembled
 These craftsmen at his old house,
 Where they broke the earth
 Started the construction
 Worked busily without a pause.
 In the front compound
 They raised a number
 Of comfortable guest apartments;
 In the rear compound
 What they built were
 Pavilions to look at the scenery.

²⁵ This section of verse is in seven-character lines. Indentation at the beginning of some of the lines is meant to give an idea of how the section as a whole includes subsections.

They erected
 A splendid gate
 That was really beautiful to look at—
 On both its sides
 The black dragon screen walls
 Were executed with consummate craft.
 Through left gate-door
 What had been contrived was
 Golden Roosters vying in crowing;
 Through the right gate-door
 What had been contrived was
 Phoenix Birds descending to earth.
 There were wolf-teeth roofs²⁶
 And also rising *dou*²⁷
 That provided an impressive sight;
 White-washed walls
 And gold-coated boards
 Marked the borders on both sides.
 Then he bought
 Fine fields and land
 Thousands of *mu*, hundreds of *qing*!²⁸
 And he also bought
 Sheep and buffaloes, and
 His horses and mules formed herds.
 Husband and wife
 Set to live together till old age
 Enjoyed their life while at home—
 In the Eastern Capital
 There was no other
 Family that possessed such wealth!
 As for these things
 Let's put them aside
 And instead take up another person,
 Called Half-City Wang:
 He was the one
 Who would be the source of trouble.

Now tell that in the Eastern Capital there lived a squire by the name of Wang Qin. His wealth was great and his character coarse; his behavior was evil and improper. If people in the Eastern Capital heard his name, they would do their best to avoid him. People called him Half-City Wang. He had been a sworn brother of Cui Wenrui's father, but when the Cui mansion had been burned by lightning so the family had been ruined and reduced to poverty, he had ignored their distress and cut off all contact with them. On

²⁶ Upturned roofs.

²⁷ The ornamented brackets between a pillar and a crossbeam.

²⁸ A *mu* 畝 is roughly one sixth of an acre; one hundred *mu* make one *qing* 頃.

the day of which we speak, he was idly walking through the streets with a boy-servant, and noticed a new mansion that was extremely impressive. So he asked his boy: "Whose mansion is this?" The boy replied: "This is the newly constructed mansion of that Cui Wenrui who is loaded with money." "So it is the mansion of the Cui family," Squire Wang said, "His father and I were friends, but he has been living in utter poverty for several years; how has he become rich again in the space of a year? Let me go over there and pay him a visit, so I can find out." As he was saying this, he arrived at the gate of the Cui mansion, and he told the gatekeeper: "Hurry up and inform your master: Half-City Wang of this city would like to see him." The gatekeeper went inside to report. Fourth Sister said: "Truly it is:

Even in a crowd there's none who cares for a poor man,
But a wealthy family has relatives in distant places!

But as he has come to pay you a visit and was a sworn brother of your father, you should go and receive him." When Wenrui heard these words, he hastily went outside to welcome his visitor. Indeed:

Wenrui went outside his gate to welcome his guest,
But he had no idea what this guest had in mind.
When he was destitute, without even a grain of rice,
Never had anyone come to ask after him.

When Cui Wenrui
 Had heard those words
 He hurried forward in great haste;
Taking large steps
 He came out of the gate
 And promptly asked what was up.
Outside the gate
 He saw the squire
 And his heart was filled with great joy;
He scurried right up
 And asked the squire:
 "Have you been in good health?"
He stepped forward
 Grasped his hand
 And led him inside.
He invited him in
 Had a banquet spread
 And was exceedingly diligent.
While the two of them
 Were drinking their wine
 And discussing this and that,
Squire Wang
 Began to speak

Interrogating Wenrui as follows:

“Allow me to ask
 All this gold and silver
 Where did it all come from?
 Could it be that
 On such and such a day
 You came by some unexpected wealth?
 You have oxen and sheep
 And also horses and mules
 In such exceedingly large numbers,
 If one compared them
 To all that is mine
 They would top them a hundred percent!”

Now tell that Squire Wang asked Cui Wenrui: “How many fields do you have, and how many mules and horses, oxen and sheep?” Wenrui replied: “I have an unlimited store of silver, a thousand *qing* of fertile fields, oxen and sheep beyond counting, and three hundred serving girls.” When Squire Wang heard this, he thought to himself: “People all say that I am Half-City Wang, but by the looks of it today Cui Wenrui has become the number one moneybags of them all.” Cui Wenrui also said: “We don’t only have fertile fields and gold and silver without number, but we also have some magical treasures that are not of this world.” The squire then asked: “How about bringing them here and letting me have a look at them so I can see whether they are the real thing or fakes?” Indeed:

Face of a man but heart of a beast: that’s Squire Wang;
 With his devious schemes he creates all kinds of trouble.

Cui Wenrui
 Went to the main hall
 And grabbed those precious objects,
 And explained to that
 Half-City Wang
 Their magical qualities in great detail:
 “Our family
 Has in its possession
 A splendid double-doored gate;
 This is an object
 That in this world
 Has no other like it.
 One of these doors
 Opens to reveal
 Golden Roosters vying in crowing,
 The other of these doors
 Happens to show
 Phoenix Birds descending to earth.

In the courtyard in the back
 Shake-out money trees
 Are neatly arranged into two rows,
 And the copper cash
 In that courtyard
 Surges up to the mansion's back gate:
 If for three days
 You neglect to
 Sweep them off the ground,
 That shaken-out
 Copper cash
 Piles up more than three feet!
 And then there is
 A treasure-collecting bowl
 That gives off a clear and bright light—
 Found only in heaven
 But not on earth
 Yet our family has one of them.
 If you throw
 A few copper coins
 Into that treasure collecting bowl,
 By the third day
 Copper coins
 Will fill the bowl to overflowing!"

Now tell that Half-City Wang said as soon as he heard this: "What is the point of keeping such treasures at home? Why don't you present them to the current Son of Heaven, so he will appoint you to an official post—wouldn't that be better?"

Wenrui said: "I also have seven wine cups of glass, and on them there are twenty-four beautiful maidens who hold a musical instrument in their hands and who sing and dance just like human beings." As soon as the squire heard this, he said: "Hurry up and fetch those out and let me have a look." Indeed:

It happened that these treasures did not know the stranger:
 Once taken out to the front courtyard they enticed disaster.

Cui Wenrui
 Seated in the high hall
 Ordered one of the serving girls,
 "Go and fetch the wine cups
 In order for the squire
 To be offered up cups of wine."
 This serving girl
 In a great hurry came

To the upstairs embroidery room,²⁹
 Took the master's words
 And reported them to
 Fourth Sister for her to hear.
 When Fourth Sister Zhang
 Had heard these words,
 She was upset and angry in her heart,
 Saying, "As for those
 Treasures of mine
 They are by no means ordinary!
 They are certainly not
 Your run of the mill
 Utensils of the mortal realm,
 It took quite some effort
 To borrow these things
 From the depths of the Eastern Ocean!
 I did it because
 I wanted to save
 My husband from disaster and misery,
 So how can he
 Take Heaven's secrets
 And disclose them to mere mortals?
 To take them out
 And show them once or twice
 Is of course not such a major matter
 But I am afraid
 That Half-City Wang
 Will conceive all kinds of evil designs.
 But if I were to
 Not let him take those
 Wine cups made out of glass,
 I would then be afraid
 Of provoking anger in
 My darling dear husband."
 She thought it over this way
 She thought it over that way
 But was unable to make up her mind.
 With a hundred instructions
 With a thousand biddings
 She let her take them to the front hall:
 "Plum Fragrance"³⁰
 Take these cups
 And make sure to be extra careful!

²⁹ Even women of elite families who could afford to pay for embroidery were expected to do embroidery in their private quarters.

³⁰ Plum Fragrance (Meixiang 梅香) is the generic name of a serving girl.

And when he leaves the house,
 To send off that Wang Qin
 Observe everything carefully!"

Squire Wang
 With great care
 Inspected them completely.

"Truly these are
 Wonderful treasures
 Hard to find in all the world!"

Now tell that Cui Wenrui saw Wang Qin holding these glass wine cups in his hands, so in love with them that he could not let them leave his hands, so they used the glass cups to drink wine. When they drank, they saw the beauties on the cups start to sing and dance just like living people. This pleased Wang Qin so much that he did not know what he was doing and collapsed in laughter on the ground. He said: "Treasures of this kind could only belong to the immortals, so where did you get them from?" Wenrui replied: "Old Squire, I would not dare hide it from you. I married a woman named Fourth Sister Zhang, and she brought these treasures with her." Wang Qin then said: "If you have such a fine wife, why don't you ask her to come to the hall in front so I can pay her my respects." Indeed:

Wenrui invited his wife to greet the squire,
 Not knowing it would be the cause of disaster.

Cui Wenrui,
 Upon hearing
 These words of Squire Wang Qin,
 Said to Plum Fragrance
 "Go fetch your mistress
 I have something to tell her."
 That Plum Fragrance
 With great haste
 Arrived at the inner quarters,
 And said: "My lady
 Master asks you
 To come and greet Squire Wang."
 When Fourth Sister Zhang
 Had heard these words
 She was upset and angry in her heart,
 But if she didn't go
 That would anger her husband
 Something she hated to do.
 Obedient to her husband
 The immortal maiden from heaven
 Left her room to greet a mortal man,
 And as she walked

She looked exactly
 Like Guanyin of the Southern Sea.³¹
 As she moved
 She floated along—
 A heavenly picture transported by clouds,
 Walking along
 She then arrived
 Before the gate of the reception hall.
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Stepping forward
 Made salutation with lowered head,
 Salutations finished
 Right there did she
 Sit down to one side.
 Squire Wang
 Lifted his head
 And observed her in great detail:
 She was indeed
 Of great beauty
 Just like a female immortal!
 How greatly she resembled
 That goddess Chang'e
 Descending from the moon palace;³²
 Looking more carefully,
 She also resembled
 Xi Shi arriving at the gate!³³
 When that Wang Qin
 Saw Fourth Sister
 His heart and mind were disturbed:
 It seemed as if he
 Was borne by the wind
 Up to the Western Heavens!
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Lowered her head
 And stealthily inspected him.
 Looking at Wan Qin
 She saw from his face
 That he greatly lacked propriety:

³¹ The Bodhisattva Guanyin 觀音 was widely venerated in female form and in this manifestation was believed to be the perfection of female beauty. One of the main centers of her cult was Mt. Putuo, a small island off the Zhejiang coast.

³² Chang'e 嫦娥 is the beautiful goddess of the moon.

³³ Xi Shi 西施 was the most beautiful maiden in the Spring and Autumn period state of Yue. The king of Yue presented her to his rival the king of Wu, hoping that the latter would become so besotted with her that he would neglect the affairs of state. When this indeed happened, the king of Yue destroyed the state of Wu.

Hiding a roguish heart
 Darting thievish eyes
 He concealed a heart bent on disaster.
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Having seen enough
 Returned to her embroidery room.
 Squire Wang
 Heart harboring evil
 Also went back to his own home,
 Not thinking of tea
 Not caring for food
 In his mind he thought to himself:
 “I have wives
 Three or four of them
 But not a one approaches her!
 If Heaven vouchsafed
 That that woman
 Would fall into my hands,
 A full bushel
 Of first-rate incense
 I’d burn to thank the gods!”
 Thinking in his heart
 Of Fourth Sister Zhang
 And her startling beauty,
 He conceived of a scheme
 And selected with care
 Some trustworthy servants.
 He told the boys
 “Listen to my words
 I have instructions for you.
 Today I have
 An important matter
 That I am going to explain to you.
 That Cui Wenrui
 Has many treasures
 And also is loaded with money.
 In each of these aspects
 He surpasses all others
 And is Number One in the Eastern Capital!
 Wine cups of glass
 Shake-out money trees
 Who on earth ever saw such things?
 Then he has
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Who surpasses a heavenly maiden.
 If it is the case

That Fourth Sister Zhang
 Can be brought into my house,
 I promise that you will
 Enjoy glory and riches
 Wealth and status for the rest of your life!"

Now tell that Wang Qin upon returning home summoned his trusted servants and said to them: "Cui Wenrui not only has an enormous amount of gold and silver, but he also has that Fourth Sister Zhang, whose beauty surpasses the heavenly immortals. I've come up with a scheme. Tomorrow I will write a little note and you will go and invite Cui Wenrui, and then we'll ply him with drink till he's drunk. You will open the back gate and take gold and silver, jewelry, and pearls and precious stones, and scatter them all along the road to his house. Then we will say that I invited him for a drink out of friendliness, but that he, however, stole these precious goods from my house. We will have him arrested and taken to the office of District Magistrate Zhang. I will also take some silver with me to buy the cooperation of His Excellency, who will have him beaten till he confesses and will condemn him for robbery and theft, and throw him into jail. After that I will marry his wife as my own. How could this not succeed! This is my plan, and on no account can you reveal the truth!" Indeed:

Wang Qin devised a scheme to harm a fellow human being,
 But by harming someone else he eventually harmed himself.

Squire Wang
 Wrote a note of invitation
 He had devised a devious scheme:
 Each and every character
 Each and every line
 Concealed a deeply hidden intention.
 Above he wrote:
 "To Mr. Cui
 I wish you health and comfort."
 Below he wrote:
 "Half-City Wang
 Greets you with all due humility.
 A few days ago
 I bothered you
 Without end,
 Today I'd like
 To invite you
 To offer you some wine in return."
 When his boy servant
 Had arrived at that
 Gate of the Cui mansion,
 He took the note
 And handed it to

Master Cui Wenrui.
 When Cui Wenrui
 Saw this note
 His heart was filled with joy.
 When Fourth Sister
 Heard about it
 Her heart was filled with worry.
 She stepped forward
 And exhorted her husband
 "Don't go to that place.
 From my observation
 This Squire Wang
 Is not a good person at all.
 I think that he
 Is purposefully
 Plotting to harm his fellow man,
 I am afraid that
 He covets our wealth
 And secretly plans to harm me."
 When Cui Wenrui
 Heard what she said
 He completely disbelieved it,
 So Fourth Sister Zhang
 Hastily took out some coins
 And used them to divine the future.
 The very first
 Combination of coins
 Allowed for no doubt or misunderstanding,
 Spelling out: "The husband
 Will be able to go
 But will have no way to return."
 And then the second
 Combination of coins
 As soon as they fell on the floor,
 Spelled out: "The husband
 Can go on this day,
 But will meet with disaster."
 But Cui Wenrui
 Covering his ears,
 Refused to listen to his wife's words.
 He turned around
 And all puffed-up
 Went out through the gate of his house.
 He ordered a servant
 To saddle his horse
 And promptly set out on his way.

Squire Wang
 Came out of his gate
 And welcomed him with great honor.
 He brought him inside
 And laid out a banquet
 Making a show of all due respect.
 The squire said:
 “My dear Mr. Cui
 A cup of wine will aid our merriment.
 Although lacking fine wine
 And lacking good dishes
 Please don’t think it beneath you—
 Please don’t refuse
 Please don’t put me off
 But instead enjoy a few cups of wine!”
 Here a cup
 There a cup
 Cup after cup he urged him on;
 Offering up one toast
 And then yet another
 Toast after toast he offered.
 When Cui Wenrui
 Had drunk until
 He was drunk as drunk could be,
 Squire Wang
 Ordered his servants
 To tie him up as tight as could be.
 He loudly cursed him:
 “You Cui Wenrui!
 You have stolen my gold and silver!”
 He cursed Wenrui
 In such a way that he
 Although having a mouth could not utter a word.
 “I invited you
 To come and have some wine
 Out of the pure goodness of my heart:
 Who would have thought
 That you on the contrary
 Would steal my gold and silver?”
 Within a short time
 They had taken Wenrui
 And forcibly shackled him tight,
 And packed him off
 To the magistrate’s office
 So that the case could be tried.

Now tell that once Wang Qin had arrested Wenrui, he took him to District Magistrate Zhang Du, and there lodged an accusation against him. Once Zhang Du had read this statement, he promptly took his seat as judge, and the various court attendants brought out Cui Wenrui. His Excellency the District Magistrate asked him: "That Squire Wang invited you to drink some wine out of friendliness, but harboring evil intentions you stole his silver, and you also kidnapped his wife! Confess to your crimes according to the truth!" When Wenrui heard this, he kowtowed and said: "I have no idea how to rob people, and on top of that I am extremely wealthy, so why would I rob him? He claims that I kidnapped his wife, but Fourth Sister has been my wife for three years, so why has he waited until today to lodge an accusation? It is obvious that he hopes to obtain my possessions by harming me, and that he hopes to use force in order to make my wife his own. May Your Excellency examine this clearly!"

District Magistrate Zhang sent away Cui Wenrui and then asked Wang Qin: "The two of you are both loaded with money, so why would he want to steal your gold and silver? This must obviously be a false accusation!" When Wang Qin noticed that the case was not going his way, he hastily produced three hundred ounces of first-rate silver, which he presented to District Magistrate Zhang. When the latter saw that amount of money, his desire was aroused, and he told the court attendants to bring Wenrui back into court for further interrogation and further questioning. Indeed:

Pure white silver can buy people whose hearts are black,
So that during interrogation blatant lies become the truth.

Magistrate Zhang
As he held court
Manifested a towering anger and rage,
And ordered his underlings:
"Hurry up and have
That criminal brought before the bench!"
Then he shouted: "Wenrui
Confess to every item
In accordance with the facts of the case,
And you'll be spared
On this very day
Being beaten till the blood flows!"
When Cui Wenrui
Heard these words
He was filled with fear and trepidation,
And he cried out:
"Your Excellency
Please listen carefully to my explanation!
Your Excellency
I would not dare
Blindly confess to this accusation.
Only after receiving an invitation
Did I go down to

Pay a visit to his house,
 Right in the midst
 Of drinking some wine
 His servants started to holler and scream;
 They took hold of me
 And against all reason claimed
 That I had stolen his gold and silver.”
 When Magistrate Zhang
 Had heard this statement
 His heart was filled with a towering rage,
 He shouted an order:
 “Now throw him down
 And apply the five instruments of torture.”
 No sooner had they started
 When they had already administered
 Fifty strokes of the broad board,
 And then they gave him
 Forty strokes of the cudgel
 Till his skin was broken and his flesh was torn.
 That Cui Wenrui
 Suffered these tortures
 But was completely unwilling to confess,
 So His Excellency said:
 “Into his body
 Nail some iron nails!”
 The various yamen attendants
 Hearing this order
 Did not dare to tarry or delay,
 So they picked up
 Some iron nails
 And in the courtyard hammered them in.
 Then they threw Wenrui
 Down on the ground
 And doused his body with boiling water,
 From the eastern side
 To the western side
 Without showing any compassion at all.
 The skin and flesh
 On his whole body
 Was completely scalded and softened,
 So that he closely resembled
 A fish that had been stripped
 Of all layers of its scales and skin.
 The attendants were ordered
 To go and bring out
 Iron chains heated red-hot,

And wrap them around him
 In order to see
 Whether he would confess or not.
 Cui Wenrui
 In a flash
 Could not bear the torture anymore,
 And against his will
 Saying whatever came into his head
 Confessed in conformity with the accusation:
 “This Squire Wang,
 It was his gold and silver
 That I went and stole.
 I crawled over his wall
 And dug under his gate
 In order to steal his gold and silver.
 I took his wife,
 I stole his riches
 Transgressing the royal law of the land—
 The words above
 Are a true statement indeed
 I wouldn’t dare hide anything.”
 Magistrate Zhang
 Seeing that he had confessed
 Had him sign the confession and affix a thumbprint,
 He had him shackled
 And then escorted to
 That dark and dreary jail!
 When the district magistrate
 Had been informed of this
 He did not dare waste a moment;
 When Squire Wang
 Had received this news
 A happy smile covered his face,
 And leading a bunch
 Of uniformed troops
 He set out to welcome the bride.
 One of the pages
 Informed Fourth Sister
 As fast as he could of this news.
 The troops told her:
 “Your husband
 While drinking wine at the Wangs,
 Stole away from
 Squire Wang
 Quite a lot of gold and silver.
 Magistrate Zhang

Has condemned him to death
 And has him locked up in the jail,
 And His Excellency
 Has in his verdict
 Awarded you to Squire Wang.
 It has been given to us
 To carry you over to
 His mansion for the wedding,
 When you enjoy luxury and glory
 And experience wealth and status
 Never forget our services to you!"

When Fourth Sister Zhang
 Had heard these words
 She was filled with a towering rage,
 She cursed that dog of an official
 And longing for her husband
 Myriads of arrows pierced her heart.
 She blamed her husband:
 "At the time you
 Did not listen to my advice,
 Now you've been unjustly jailed
 Suffered every kind of torture
 Who is it that is to blame?"

The troops and cavalry
 Urged Fourth Sister
 To set out with all haste,
 But Fourth Sister Zhang
 Lowering her head
 Came up with a scheme of her own.

Now tell that when Fourth Sister heard the soldiers say that her husband had been thrown in jail, her heart was filled with rage. While the troops were urging her to get going, she employed her supernatural powers and dispersed them in all directions. The troops informed the district magistrate. When Magistrate Zhang heard this, he was greatly astonished, and this time he dispatched three hundred troops to go and arrest Fourth Sister. The troops surged forward like a swarm of bees and all together came into action with a great show of power, but Fourth Sister recited her true spells and magical words, and when she pointed a finger to the sky, a raven-wood cudgel came rolling down and delivered such a beating to these troops that some lost their lives and some were wounded, leaving only a few to run away and report the news.

Fourth Sister Zhang
 Displayed her supernatural powers
 With their myriads of transformations,
 And she killed
 Of those troops

More than two hundred men,
 With one blow of the cudgel
 She gave them such a beating
 They fled in all directions;
 With one blow of her staff
 She gave them such a beating
 They were reduced to utter disorder.
 Magistrate Zhang
 Received such a beating
 That he knew he was in a bad situation,
 So he ordered his subordinates
 To call up and mobilize
 The whole army to join the campaign.
 Five thousand men
 Surrounded the Cui mansion
 Layer after layer deep,
 But Fourth Sister Zhang
 At such a sight
 Only smiled a cold smile.
 She said "District Magistrate
 Hurry up and call back your troops
 And return my dear husband to me—
 That will save
 You and me
 From having to take up arms and fight.
 But if you will not
 Call back your troops
 And continue to besiege the Cui mansion,
 When the time comes
 I will force you to
 Lose your life and go to the land of darkness."
 Magistrate Zhang
 Called out to his underlings:
 "Capture and arrest that demonic monster!
 She has killed
 Government troops
 Her crime is not light!
 Her husband
 That thief
 Has been thrown in jail,
 How can there be
 This sort of
 Brazen demonic monster?"
 When Fourth Sister Zhang
 Had heard these words,
 Her heart was filled with anger and rage,

Below her feet
 Auspicious clouds rose up
 And she stood in the middle of the sky.
 Then she changed
 Into seven dragons
 Rising higher and higher in the clouds,
 And threw one needle
 For embroidering flowers
 Up into the emptiness of the sky.
 She called up a twister,
 Sent down heavy rains
 Thunder and lightning booming together!
 The heavens turned black
 And the earth was darkened
 Scaring everyone out of their wits.
 When she had captured
 Magistrate Zhang
 She wanted to immediately kill him,
 But then she feared
 That the Jade Emperor
 Would punish her for that infraction.
 So she took that scoundrel
 And strung him up by his hands
 On top of the tower above the city gate,
 And gave him such a beating
 That from his whole body
 Blood came dripping down.
 She also gave him
 So many strokes with a cudgel
 That his skin broke and his flesh was torn,
 And Magistrate Zhang
 Under such heavy torture
 Sank into a stupor.
 He cried out:
 "Young lady
 Please spare my worthless life!"
 He also cried out:
 "Your ladyship
 If you let me live what life is left to me,
 From this day forward
 I will never again dare
 Act in such an outrageous way!"
 When she saw Zhang Du
 And how he implored her
 In such a miserable manner,
 Fourth Sister Zhang

Upon hearing these words
 Lowered her head and pondered the matter:
 In her heart
 Compassion arose
 And she ended up sparing his life.

Now tell that once Fourth Sister had released Zhang Du, she returned home and told Wenrui's elderly mother: "Your son is languishing in jail, but just put your mind at rest and stay home and watch over things. I am going to go save my husband, and when that's done we can take further measures." Having said that, she went through the gate and took off, and before too long had arrived at Zhang Du's yamen. When Zhang Du saw Fourth Sister, he was so scared that his soul flew off beyond heaven, and he ran for his life! Indeed:

 Fourth Sister had freed Zhang Du,
 And now Zhang Du ran for his life.

Fourth Sister Zhang
 Having arrived
 At the office of the district magistrate,
 Promptly scared that
 Magistrate Zhang
 So that he hurriedly ran for his life!
 Following her nose
 She found herself at
 The southern jail,
 She saw inside
 That southern jail
 Quite a number of convicts.
 Each and every one
 Suffered bitter pain
 Their hair unbound and hanging loose.
 "But I don't see
 My own dear dear husband—
 Not a shadow of him to be found!"
 Then when she opened
 The door of the eastern jail
 And took a look inside,
 What she saw was
 A face and appearance
 That was black and dirty!
 Only when Fourth Sister
 Had gone up to him
 And observed the face closely,
 Did she recognize
 Her very own

Darling husband!
 With both arms
 She caught up in an embrace
 That husband of hers,
 And from her eyes
 Tears gushed forth
 And she let out a cry of woe.
 She cried out:
 “My dear husband
 You suffered a terrible wrong,
 But this was because
 Of your own mistake
 So whom can you blame?
 Think back to that time
 When I exhorted you
 But you refused to listen!
 But now that you
 Have suffered all kinds of torture
 How could I bear to not do anything?”
 As she was speaking
 She displayed her powers
 And spat out some immortal water,
 That took her husband’s
 Iron shackles and cangue
 And made them fall into the dust.
 Cui Wenrui
 Saw that Fourth Sister’s
 Magic powers were very great,
 In that prison
 All the other convicts
 Asked him to ask for her help!

Now tell that when Fourth Sister Zhang saved her husband in the prison, all the criminals saw it very clearly. They all knelt down on the floor and implored her: “Your ladyship, please also save us from this prison! We will never forget such a great favor!” When Fourth Sister heard these words, she recited her magic words and true spells, and promptly the iron shackles and cangues on those criminals fell to the floor. They hurried to express their gratitude to Fourth Sister, and then each went back to his home. Employing the true fire of *samadhi* Fourth Sister burned down the prison. Once they were back home, husband and wife discussed how to kill Wang Qin and his whole family. Indeed:

The golden lad and jade maiden met once again:
 Where clouds part bright daylight can be seen!

Once Fourth Sister Zhang

Had saved her husband
 They returned to their mansion;
 They greeted his mother
 And then discussed
 How they could greatly take revenge.
 As they were talking
 They watched the sun
 Sink down behind the western hills,
 And they pondered
 How they would the next day
 Again confront their arch-enemy.
 The two of them
 Could not for one moment
 Let go or part from each other,
 But suddenly they heard
 From the drum tower
 The beating out of the watch.³⁴
 At the first watch
 They entered the embroidery room
 Silver lamps gleamed on high;
 At the second watch
 Husband and wife
 Were in perfect emotional union;
 At the third watch
 Underneath a red damask quilt
 The two of them went to bed;
 At the fourth watch
 They were holding hands
 Hard to part or divide.
 At the fifth watch,
 The Golden Rooster crowed
 And the sky became very bright.
 They hastily got up
 And went to the Wang mansion
 Where she greatly displayed her powers.
 With one shake of her body
 She was transformed
 To a height of thirty-six *zhang*,³⁵
 First she grabbed that
 Harmer of men
 That villain Wang Qin.
 “You sought to ruin me
 And also to harm
 My darling husband,

³⁴ The text actually says that the third watch was beaten, but that makes no sense.

³⁵ One *zhang* 丈 equals ten Chinese feet (each foot was slightly shorter than an English foot).

I will cause you
 This very day
 To meet the king of the dead.
 I will capture your
 Entire household
 And completely slaughter them all,
 I will snatch you up
 You villain Wang Qin
 And mince your corpse into a myriad pieces!"

She tore open his belly
 Gouged out his eyes
 And chopped his whole body into mincemeat.
 As for the furniture
 And the utensils
 She smashed them all to bits and pieces.

Fourth Sister Zhang
 Greatly took revenge
 But no more of that for now,
 Instead let us speak
 Of Magistrate Zhang
 Who reported the case to Judge Bao:

"In the Eastern Capital
 On Old North Street
 There is a small lane;
 In the mansion
 Of Cui Wenrui
 A demonic monster has appeared.

Its name is called
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 And she has great supernatural powers;
 She and that
 Cui Wenrui
 Cohabit as husband and wife.

Squire Wang
 Invited Wenrui
 With the best of intentions indeed—
 How could he know
 That this Wenrui
 Would steal his silver and gold?

Squire Wang
 Brought that criminal Cui
 Down to my yamen;
 With due haste I
 Accepted his complaint
 And read it very carefully.

I ordered my troops

To go to his house
 To conduct a thorough investigation,
 But she struck dead
 My soldiers,
 Two hundred men and more!
 She also released
 From my prison
 Three hundred criminals,
 With fire
 She further burned down
 That jailhouse of mine.
 To get revenge
 She went to Wang's house
 And wiped out the entire household,
 I implore Your Honor
 To hurriedly apprehend
 That demonic monster!"

Now tell that Judge Bao, upon hearing this, thought to himself: "How is it possible that such a demonic monster manifests itself in the present world of peace and order? This Zhang Du is ordinarily not upright in the way he conducts official business. I have always wanted to remove him but I never had an opportunity. Now that he has come to report to me today, I won't be able to stop worrying about him." But let's put Zhang Du aside for the moment—he will be dealt with properly later. Let's only tell how Judge Bao ordered Wang Zhao and Ma Han to ready their horses and men. Taking his demonoscope³⁶ with him, he set out with his party to go see. Indeed:

 Possessing demon-beheading sword and demon-revealing mirror,
 During the day he judges the living and at night he judges the dead.

That Judge Bao
 Having heard this report
 Pondered the matter in his mind;
 He ordered Wang Zhao
 And also Ma Han
 To hurriedly go before.
 They carried the bronze chopper³⁷
 And also the iron sword—
 How bright they gleamed!
 They also took
 The demonoscope
 To capture that demonic monster
 And the peach wood shackles

³⁶ *Zhaoyao jing* 照妖鏡: a mirror that reveals the true shape and appearance of shape-shifting demons.

³⁷ The Judge Bao of the Qing dynasty had three of these huge choppers (*zha* 鋤) that he used for executing different classes of people.

And willow wood cudgels
 Feared by gods and ghosts alike.
 Those carrying the sword
 And those carrying the chopper
 Followed closely behind.
 The bronze “melons”³⁸
 And crescent moon hatchets
 Covered sky and earth,
 While the gods of the hills
 And the gods of the soil
 Accompanied him with due diligence.
 Within a short while
 They had arrived
 Outside the gate of the Cui mansion,
 And Lord Bao called out:
 “Quickly capture and arrest
 That demonic monster Fourth Sister!”
 This so scared that
 Household of people
 That their gall bladders³⁹ shook and their hearts were frightened,
 But Fourth Sister Zhang
 On hearing this command
 Only smiled a cold smile.
 She went outside
 And lifted her head
 And took it all in:
 On all four sides
 They were surrounded so tightly
 That not a drop of water could leak out!
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Exhorted Judge Bao:
 “Hurry up and pull back your troops,
 Otherwise with eyes wide open
 And quite intentionally
 You will be offering yourself up to disaster!”
 But when Judge Bao⁴⁰
 Saw Fourth Sister
 He called out: “You demonic monster,
 I ordered my subordinates
 To hurriedly apprehend you
 So do not do anything foolish.”
 The Star of Literature

³⁸ Heavy metal balls mounted on top of a short staff and used as weapons.

³⁹ The gall bladder was considered the locus of courage in the body.

⁴⁰ The text actually refers to him here by a title given him in popular literature, Wenzheng 文正 (“Cultured and Upright”).

Served as prime minister⁴¹
 But failed to recognize her as an immortal,
 Because he believed
 The report of Zhang Du
 He wanted to take military action!

Now tell that Judge Bao told his underlings to bring out the demonoscope. Fourth Sister said: “Star of Literature, if you can display my true nature in that demonoscope, I will truly be impressed by your abilities!” Judge Bao employed his demonoscope and shone it again and again on her, but he did not see any demonic shape at all! Indeed:

He shone the magic mirror again and again,
 But no demonic monster appeared therein.

When her left side
 Came before the mirror
 No form or reflection appeared;
 When her right side
 Came before the mirror
 No human shape could be seen either.
 Chancellor Bao
 At this time
 Saw rage rise up in his heart,
 He ordered his underlings
 To advance together
 And apprehend that woman.
 There was Wang Zhao
 And also Ma Han
 Who advanced and began to fight,
 But Fourth Sister Zhang
 Suppressed her anger
 And only played a little trick on them.
 First she employed
 An eye-blinding magic
 So their eyes were blinded by flowers;
 Next she employed
 A body-fixing magic
 So their bodies were fully immobilized.
 That Wang Zhao
 Could not lift
 His awe-inspiring running feet,
 And that Ma Han
 Could not display
 The martial arts of all his limbs.

⁴¹ In popular literature Judge Bao was thought to have been an incarnation of the Star of Literature (Wenqu xing 文曲星). In real life he never served as prime minister.

She took Judge Bao
 And also blinded him
 So that his eyes blurred and pupils went dark;
 She pulled him down from his horse
 And he was fixed and immobilized
 By the main gate of the front courtyard.
 This body-fixing magic
 Had immobilized
 The five hundred government troops,
 Scaring those
 Various official troops
 So that their gall bladders quaked and their hearts were frightened.
 One of those present
 Hastily made a bow
 For he had a quick mind and keen eyes,
 He said: "Milady,
 As your powers are divine,
 Please do us a favor!
 That actually is
 The court-appointed
 His Honor the Chancellor,
 If you kill him
 You are bound to arouse
 The towering rage of the imperial court!"
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Was not in the least afraid
 Of either the imperial court or beyond,
 This so scared
 Cui Wenrui,
 That he hurriedly pled on Bao's behalf.
 So Fourth Sister
 Listened to her husband,
 And released Judge Bao,
 But Judge Bao
 Memorialized the Humane Ancestor
 Informing him in great detail of the events.

Now tell that when Judge Bao had entered the palace and paid his respects to His Majesty the Humane Ancestor, he told how a demonic monster had appeared in the mansion of Cui Wenrui of the Eastern Capital: her name was Fourth Sister Zhang; she was sixteen years of age, possessed great supernatural powers, and was capable of many transformations. She had murdered all the members, old and young, of the household of Wang Qin, and had killed a complete detachment of men and horses under Magistrate Zhang. "When I went forward to capture and arrest her I returned greatly defeated. I was also unable to use my demonoscope to find out what kind of demonic monster she was. I

therefore request Your Majesty to dispatch a major force to go capture and arrest her.”
Indeed:

Judge Bao entered the palace and bowed to the Humane Ancestor:
“The divine power of Fourth Sister even frightens the lofty skies.”

Judge Bao declared:

“There are no other people
Who can capture this demonic monster:

All you can do
Is to summon the Yangs and the Huyans
And have both clans lead forth their troops.”

The Humane Ancestor
Hearing this report
Promptly proclaimed an imperial edict,

An emissary
Went first to that
Mansion of Heavenly Waves.⁴²

He first paid his respects
To Taijun the Matriarch,
And presented the imperial order,

And the Matriarch,
Having received the edict
Hurriedly read it through:

“In the Eastern Capital
A demonic monster has appeared
Harming our troops and killing our officers,

So your great-grandson
Yang Wenguang
Is ordered to mobilize his entire army!”

Yet another emissary
Also had arrived
At the mansion of the Huyan family,

Where Huyan Qing
And the princess
Came forward to receive the edict.

As His Imperial Majesty
Had proclaimed this edict
They didn’t dare tarry or delay,

But with all due speed
Proceeded to the parade-ground
And mobilized their troops for action.

Yang Wenguang
And Huyan Qing
These two great generals,

⁴² Home of the Yang family.

In accordance with the edict
 Departed the palace gates
 In order to apprehend that monster.
 Leading cavalry and infantry
 They ordered their whole army
 To raise a battle cry all in one voice,
 As three cannons resounded,
 They arrived outside
 The gate of the Cui mansion.
 On all four sides
 They tightly surrounded
 This great mansion of the Cui family,
 When commanded three times
 They shouted in one voice:
 “Apprehend that demonic monster!”
 When Cui Wenrui
 Saw how things were,
 He was scared completely out of his wits,
 Trembling with fear
 He said: “My dear wife
 This disaster we’ve called down is not light!”
 But Fourth Sister
 Was not concerned in the least
 In her eyes they counted for nothing at all.
 She was not afraid
 Of these great generals
 And their millions of strong troops:
 “Just watch how I
 Make my advance
 See if those men and horses,
 Each and every one
 Are not caused by me
 To go and meet the king of the dead!”
 When she rushed outside
 She came face to face
 With General Huyan Qing,⁴³
 He cursed her:
 “How dare you
 Demonic monster Fourth Sister!
 Hurry over
 And give up your life
 Better not act foolishly,
 That would avoid
 Our having to use our troops
 Bringing destruction and loss of life.”

⁴³ The text here gives Hu as his surname and Yanqing as his personal name.

When Fourth Sister Zhang
 Had heard these words
 She did not react by word or expression,
 But recited true spells
 And recited magic words
 That penetrated the very gate of heaven!
 She also took out
 A golden hairpin
 On which she blew one puff of breath,
 Whereupon it turned
 Into a yellow dragon stallion
 That surpassed any horned dragon at leaping;
 She also took hold
 Of a silk handkerchief
 Which she twisted a few times.
 It changed into a golden tiger
 And into a jade unicorn
 Both displaying blinding light.
 A golden cup
 She took in her hands
 And turned it round several times,
 One puff of breath
 And it changed into
 A black-bladed sword!
 Huyan Qing
 Observing how Fourth Sister
 Could transform with a shake of her body,
 Raised his sword
 Rushed forward to fight
 His heart frightened and gall quaking!
 On the other side
 Yang Wenguang
 Felt a towering rage in his heart,
 He rushed forward
 To lend a hand
 And the ether of death rose up in thick clouds!
 Spear crossed blade
 And blade crossed spear
 Crashing together with deafening noise,
 They fought in such a way
 That throughout the Eastern Capital
 Earth and sky were filled with darkness.
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Fighting these two generals
 Did not dare treat them lightly,
 So she jumped out of the fray

And rose upon a fine cloud
 To stand in the empty sky.
 Toward the Gate of Heaven
 She pointed just once,
 And the entire sky turned black:
 There was swirling dust
 And flying stones
 That threw the army into disorder!
 They rained down so thickly
 That Huyan Qing
 Could not distinguish north from south;
 They rained down so thickly
 That Yang Wenguang
 Could not separate east from west.
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Then produced
 The soul-catching bottle:
 With a wave of her hand
 Generals Yang and Huyan
 Were both sucked into this magic bottle.
 Using flying stones
 She caused the death
 Of a thousand officers and troops,
 All of the army
 Seeing this state of affairs
 Decided it best to run for their lives.

Now tell that when various officers and troops reported their defeat to the Throne, this frightened His Majesty the Humane Ancestor so much that he was at a loss for what to do. He hurriedly dispatched Judge Bao to go to the Mansion of Heavenly Waves to again raise troops to come to the rescue. When the Matriarch heard his report, tears flowed from her eyes, and she said: "I don't know how many men of the Yang family have died for the sake of the Song empire! Let me go and capture this demonic monster and free the dynasty from this harm." When Judge Bao heard this, his heart was filled with joy, and he said: "If the women generals of the Yang family join the battle to capture this demon, success is ensured. I will, for the moment, go back to my office in the southern city."⁴⁴ Indeed:

When he heard these words, Lord Bao was filled with joy:
 The women generals of the Yang family would join the fray.

When Lord Bao
 Saw that the Yang family

⁴⁴ The office in the southern city is the yamen of the prefect of Kaifeng. The historical Bao Zheng only served as prefect of Kaifeng for a little more than one year, but in the popular mind Judge Bao was identified with that function.

Had women generals who were so heroic,
 He knew that when they went
 To apprehend that demonic monster
 They were certainly bound to succeed.

But let's not talk
 About Black-Faced Judge Bao
 Who returned to his own office,
 But let's only talk
 Of those heroic
 Yang family women generals.

Third Sister Li
 Went together with them
 To go take great revenge,
 There was also her daughter
 'Prettier than a Flower'
 Who wanted to make a contribution too.

Mu Guiying
 Called the roll
 And then left the Yang family mansion;
 She next arrived
 At the Huyan family mansion
 Where she fully explained the situation.

At the Huyan mansion
 Out there came
 The princess [Lanfeng].

When she saw
 Mu Guiying,
 She asked about all the details.
 'Prettier than a Flower'
 And Third Sister Li
 Completely told them to her.

On this side
 This stirred to rage
 The princess Lanfeng.

"My husband
 Huyan Qing
 Has suffered such a terrible disaster,

I too today
 Definitely want to
 Capture and arrest that demonic monster!"

These two families
 Mobilized their troops
 And set out to pay a visit to His Majesty,

Receiving his order
 To lead their troops

They were sure to achieve immediate victory.
 These two families
 Consisted exclusively
 Of female troops and female officers;
 They broke up camp
 And soon arrived
 At the richly decorated palace gate.
 In the golden hall
 They kowtowed to the emperor
 Thanking His Majesty for his grace;
 As soon as he saw them
 The Humane Ancestor
 Was filled with great joy in his heart,
 And he declared:
 "Mu Guiying
 Will be commander-in-chief.
 My daughter Lanfeng,
 Do not be lax:
 I appoint you as vanguard."

Now tell that when Princess Lanfeng had been made the captain of the vanguard, she selected three thousand mounted soldiers, and after she had fired a cannon, they all set out. The troops shouted their battle cries and the war horses snorted and neighed. Within a short while they had arrived outside the gate of the Cui mansion. They surrounded it tightly, and shouted: "You demonic monster, hurry up and come out here to do battle!" Cui Wenrui was so scared that he did not know where to hide himself, and when he tried to escape through the back door, he was arrested by women generals of the Yang family. At precisely that time Fourth Sister Zhang was sitting in her embroidery room and heard the shouting and noise of men and horses. A serving girl came to report, and only then did she realize that the female generals of the Huyan and Yang families had surrounded the mansion. Fourth Sister went outside to have a look. Indeed:

She greatly created havoc in the Eastern Capital,
 Time and time again pitched battles were fought.

Mu Guiying
 Ordered her troops
 To pitch camp and build fortifications,
 And she encircled
 The Cui mansion
 So tightly no drop of water could escape.
 This angered
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Her heart was filled by a towering rage;
 She swiftly came outside
 Mounted her horse

And opened an armed attack.
 'Prettier than a Flower'
 Came forward
 To meet her in battle,
 These two women,
 Compared their prowess
 Each displaying her supernatural skills.
 They fought and fought
 Some tens of rounds
 Without deciding winner and loser,
 Then 'Prettier than a Flower'
 Spat out some magic water
 And rose up into the empty sky;
 Holding in her hand
 A demon-subduing cudgel
 She shook herself to transform,
 And transformed herself
 Into a three-headed
 Six-armed giant:
 When she opened her mouth
 It was as big as a blood bowl
 With teeth like awls of steel,
 Her two eyes
 Resembled bronze bells
 As if about to devour human beings!
 When Fourth Sister Zhang
 Saw this apparition,
 A faint smile briefly crossed her face,
 She pulled out
 Her embroidery needles
 And threw them high into the sky.
 Reciting a spell
 She turned them into
 Ten fierce tigers,
 Who rose up into
 The middle of the sky
 Ready to manifest their great might.
 Shaking their heads
 And sweeping their tails
 They bared their fangs and claws,
 They wanted to eat
 That three-headed
 Six-armed giant.
 'Prettier than a Flower'
 No sooner saw them
 Than she turned around and took to her heels;

On the other side
 Third Sister Li
 Flourished her blade of steel.
 She recited true spells
 And magic words too
 And a wild storm started to blow;
 She made sand swirl
 And stones fly
 It was like thunder booming.
 But Fourth Sister Zhang
 Put into employ
 A turn-around magic,
 And that swirling sand
 And flying stones
 Turned around to batter 'Prettier than a Flower'!⁴⁵
 Mu Guiying
 Seeing this
 Was filled with a towering rage,
 And she threw paper men
 And also paper horses
 Up into the sky.
 But Fourth Sister Zhang
 Spat out magic water
 And darkened heaven and earth:
 A dust storm blew
 Torrential rain fell
 Thunder crashed and lightning flashed!
 But from the Huyan mansion
 There now rushed forward
 Young Princess Lanfeng,
 Her forces
 And those of the Yangs
 Collaborated in a coordinated attack.
 Princess Lanfeng
 Made use of sesame seeds
 Three pecks and three cups in all,
 Onto those seeds
 She blew a breath
 And transformed them into an army.
 All of these troops
 Raised blades of steel
 And rushed forward to join battle;
 In a great hubbub
 They surrounded Fourth Sister
 So that she was unable to make any move.

⁴⁵ As 'Prettier than a Flower' has already fled the battle field, this is probably a mistake for Third Sister Li.

But Fourth Sister Zhang
 Was not afraid at all
 At the loud shouts of the enemy troops;
 She gave her body a shake:
 Ten turned to a hundred
 A hundred to ten million!
 They dashed to the east
 They fought to the west
 And surrounded the government soldiers.
 ‘Prettier than a Flower’
 And Princess Lanfeng
 Sought to block them in the west and in the east.
 Third Sister Li
 Was so anxious that
 She could not make a move,
 But Guiying cried:
 “Six-Armed One
 Don’t forget to come to our rescue!”
 In this battle
 They fought until
 The sky had lost its light:
 Wild winds blew
 Torrential rain fell
 Sun and moon lost their brilliance.
 The various women generals
 Were lost in a haze
 Dashing to the east and the west;
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Took out her magic bottle
 And captured the souls of them all.
 Within a short while
 She had captured
 All the Huyan and Yang women generals,
 And before anyone knew
 Evening had fallen
 And the moon had risen above the buildings.
 But when she went home
 No husband was there
 And tears flowed forth from her eyes,
 Cui Wenrui
 Had been captured
 And was enduring suffering.
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 In her embroidery room
 Pondered this matter all by herself:
 “I still will have

To go out again
To save my darling and bring him home!”

Now tell that while Fourth Sister Zhang was in her embroidery room she thought about her husband who was still locked up in custody. Disregarding her fatigue from doing battle, she wanted to immediately go and rescue him. Her husband Cui Wenrui had been captured by the women generals of the Yang family and taken to the yamen in the southern city. Fourth Sister Zhang hurried there, and using a body-concealing magic, saved him and brought him home.

Let’s tell instead that Judge Bao thought to himself: “This Fourth Sister Zhang is not some demonic monster. She must be an astral deity who has escaped from somewhere or other, but she is creating such havoc in the Eastern Capital that no one can live in peace. As for the generals of the Huyan and Yang families, I don’t know if they are alive or dead. The only solution is for me to go and conduct an investigation in the offices of the underworld and in the palaces of heaven.” When he had reached this conclusion, he promptly ascended the palace hall and memorialized the Humane Ancestor. When the latter had heard his proposal, he gave him a golden seal, and told him to go and come back as quickly as possible. Indeed:

When the Humane Ancestor heard Judge Bao’s proposal,
He promptly offered him three beakers of imperial wine.
In order to apprehend and arrest that Fourth Sister Zhang,
Judge Bao has to travel through underworlds and heavens.

That Judge Bao
Drank the imperial wine
And thanked the Humane Ancestor;
He then took out
The Yin and Yang boards⁴⁶
And the headrest that calls back the soul.
Judge Bao’s
Three ethereal souls
Arrived in the Dark Offices,
His seven earthly souls
Also found their way
To the middle of the underworld.
Before long
He had arrived
At the precious hall of King Yama,
And the ten infernal kings
Together came outside
To receive Judge Bao.
They all asked him:
“Star of Literature
What business brings you here?”

⁴⁶ When sleeping on a bed made of these boards, Judge Bao’s souls can travel through heavens and hells.

Judge Bao replied:
 "I have come here
 To investigate the case of a demon.
 In the Eastern Capital
 There has appeared
 A horrific demonic monster,
 And I very much fear
 That she will bring to disorder
 The empire of the Song dynasty.
 The finest heroes
 Went to arrest her
 But they all failed to achieve victory,
 Causing the Eastern Capital
 To be so disturbed
 That everything is out of joint.
 In your halls
 Has there gone missing
 Any ghost or deity perhaps?
 With great care
 Please make a check
 To see if all is as it should be."

Now tell that when the ten kings of the infernal courts had heard the request of Judge Bao, they ordered the infernal judges to go and investigate each bureau of the underworld administration to see which bureau might have lost track of a ghost or deity. When the infernal judges received this command, they completely investigated all eighteen layers of hell, but none had lost track of a ghost or deity. When Judge Bao heard this, he took his leave of the infernal kings.

He then went on to the Thunderclap Monastery in the Western Heaven, where he met with Our Buddha the Tathagatha. After he had paid his respects, he once again told how a demon had appeared in the Eastern Capital and asked Lord Buddha to conduct an investigation. The Tathagatha dispatched people to completely check on the Eighteen Arhats, the Eight Great Diamond Kings, and the Thirty-Six Devas, but they were all at their posts and none had run off. Judge Bao quickly took his leave of Lord Buddha and at the third quarter of the first hour he arrived at the Southern Gate of Heaven to conduct an investigation in the palaces of heaven. Indeed:⁴⁷

Judge Bao lay down
 On his Yin and Yang couch
 Wanting to go up to the palace of heaven,
 And before too long
 He did arrive
 At the Southern Gate of Heaven.

⁴⁷ In this text prose passages as a rule are followed by a couplet or a quatrain introduced by this phrase "Indeed" (*Zhengshi* 正是), but no couplet or quatrain appears in the original text at this point.

The Star of Great White⁴⁸
 Escorted Judge Bao
 To go see the Jade Emperor,
 And Jade Emperor Zhang
 Hurriedly began to speak
 Asking the chancellor:
 “I dispatched you
 Star of Literature
 To go down from this heavenly palace,
 Together with the Song court’s
 Humane Ancestor
 To rule the country and pacify the people.
 For what reason
 Have you now come to
 The Precious Hall of the Divine Welkin?
 Could it be that
 The Humane Ancestor
 By any chance has treated you unfairly?”
 When Chancellor Bao
 Heard these questions
 He hurriedly stepped forward and replied:
 “Your Imperial Majesty
 In the Eastern Capital
 A demonic monster has appeared.
 She has brought down
 Quite a number of
 Loyal and excellent top generals,
 She has also killed
 Countless numbers of
 Ordinary people and commoners!
 I have been wondering
 Whether up here in heaven
 Some astral deity might have escaped,
 And created such havoc
 In the Eastern Capital
 That the people there cannot live in peace?
 So I implore Your Majesty
 To very carefully
 Do a complete investigation,
 To see which deity
 May have escaped
 So she may be captured and returned to heaven.”

Now tell that the Jade Emperor, when he had heard this report, ordered the
 divinities on duty for that day to check the Twenty Eight Asterisms, the Nine Astral

⁴⁸ The Star of Great White is the planet Venus, one of the “moving stars.”

Palaces of the Dipper, the Five Lakes and the Four Seas, and the Twenty Four Grottoes, but they all reported that no deity had escaped. The Jade Emperor then gave an order for the investigation of the Dipper and Buffalo Palace of the Queen-Mother. Indeed:

Ascending to heaven, entering the earth: he searched everywhere,
But still he did not know where Fourth Sister had come from.

That Queen-Mother

On receiving this command

Was in no position to ignore it,

In Dipper and Buffalo Palace

She very carefully

Investigated so that all was clear.

From the start

Down to the end

They searched here and searched there:

In Dipper and Buffalo Palace

Only one person was missing:

The Jade Emperor's own fourth daughter!

From the celestial palace

She had been gone

The space of three days,

But in the realm of men

That was equal to

Three years and more!

That Judge Bao

Hearing this report

Was completely scared out of his wits:

So all along it had been

The Jade Emperor's

Fourth daughter no less!

The Jade Emperor said:

"Star of Literature

First go back to earth,

In the Eastern Capital

Inform the Humane Ancestor

That I will dispatch my celestial troops.

First I will dispatch

From the Dragon King's Palace

Water Dragon Crown Prince;

Second I will dispatch

Li Nezha

To restore order to heaven and earth."

That Judge Bao

Thanked the Jade Emperor

And quickly left the palaces of heaven;

On the soul-recalling headrest
 He woke from his sleep
 And so returned to this realm of light.
 In the five watches of the night
 He had completely traveled through
 Both the underworld and the heavens,
 And with great pleasure
 Reported to the Humane Ancestor
 The success he achieved on this mission.
 The Humane Ancestor
 Poured him imperial wine
 And hurriedly expressed his thanks to Judge Bao:
 “You have investigated
 The heavenly palaces
 So what was the cause?”
 Chancellor Bao
 Memorialized the emperor
 “Please listen to my clear report,
 As your minister I
 First went to
 The offices of the infernal bureaucracy,
 Arriving there
 A complete investigation was done
 But no relevant information was obtained.
 But up in heaven
 In the Dipper and Buffalo Palace
 Investigation provided a clear result:
 It was discovered that
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Had left the Dipper and Buffalo Palace;
 She descended to the mortal world
 And arrived in the Eastern Capital
 Now more than three years ago.
 The Jade Emperor
 Proclaimed an edict
 Dispatching celestial troops,
 They will descend
 To arrest Fourth Sister
 And she will return to the Heavenly Palace.”
 When the Humane Ancestor
 Had heard these words
 He was greatly frightened;
 To his left and right
 Civil and military officials
 Shuddered with fear.
 They all had thought

Fourth Sister Zhang
 Was some kind of demonic monster;
 Nobody had known
 That she actually was
 The Jade Emperor's precious daughter!
 This line of the story
 We abandon for the moment
 We can't go into detail now,
 But instead we return
 To Fourth Sister Zhang
 And the way in which she wielded her weapons.

Now tell that Fourth Sister Zhang and her husband were resting in her embroidery room, when she suddenly felt her ears burning and her eyes twitching. When she silently calculated what this meant, she realized that this spelled trouble, so she promptly told her husband: "Today the Jade Emperor will dispatch heavenly troops to this place to arrest me and take me back to heaven." When Wenrui heard these words, he was frightened and panicked without end, but Fourth Sister said: "My darling, don't worry! If they come this way, I will inflict such a defeat on them that they will be left with not one piece of armor intact!"

As they were speaking, the heavenly troops arrived. Fourth Sister Zhang rose to her feet and went outside. When she lifted her head to have a look, she noticed the Water Dragon Crown Prince rising atop the clouds. Very soon he had arrived in front of her. The Crown Prince came forward, bowed to Fourth Sister, and said: "Princess, at the command of the Jade Emperor I have come here to invite you to return to heaven." When Fourth Sister heard this, she said: "If this is an invitation, then why have you come in full armor?" The Crown Prince replied: "If you reject the invitation, I'll be obliged to use force." Fourth Sister was filled by rage when she heard this, and she cursed him, saying: "You have some gall! If you have the ability to defeat me, I will go back." Indeed:

 Fourth Sister reviled the Crown Prince;
 The Crown Prince was filled with rage.

That Crown Prince
 Hurriedly began to speak,
 Furiously cursing Fourth Sister;
 He cursed her:
 "Fourth Sister Zhang
 Listen carefully to my words.
 Your father
 The Jade Emperor
 Is the ruler of the myriads of gods;
 He administers the cosmos
 Dominates heaven and earth
 How awesome is his authority!
 This very day

I received from him
 An edict to transmit to you:
 Return with all speed
 To the heavenly palace
 And report to that worthy deity!"
 When Fourth Sister Zhang
 Had heard these words
 A burning rage rose up in her heart:
 "You and I
 Will display our powers
 To see who comes out on top!"
 The Crown Prince was furious
 And did not say any word
 But with a shake of his body transformed,
 He transformed himself
 With one clap of thunder⁴⁹
 Promptly into a dragon made of fire.
 He spat from his mouth
 A huge glare of fire
 That rose up thousands of *zhang*,
 But Fourth Sister Zhang
 When she saw that
 Just gave a little snort in her nose.
 Without any panic
 She took out
 A magic object she carried on her person;
 She raised this
 Treasure-collecting bowl
 And flung it high into the empty sky.
 Before too long
 Black clouds assembled
 And everything grew dark and blurry,
 A great wind blew
 Mixed with hailstones
 While a heavy rain came pouring down.
 That fire dragon
 Seeing the situation below him
 Beat his retreat with all possible speed,
 And so that Crown Prince
 Did not achieve victory
 But instead nearly lost his life!
 But from the other side
 Came dashing out
 Crown Prince Nezha,
 He advanced and cursed

⁴⁹ Here the text reads *zi he lei* 子和雷, which is difficult to make sense of.

“You villainous young lady!”
 And displayed his miraculous powers.
 His transformation
 Was nothing less than
 A three-headed six-armed giant:
 With his feet treading
 On wheels of fire
 He inspired more fear than a unicorn!
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Never for one moment
 Took serious notice of him,
 She just loudly shouted:
 “You brazen rogue
 Don’t try to show off your skills.
 Never in my life
 Did I treat you badly
 So why do you try to bully me?”
 Quickly she
 Drew out a sword
 Which she held up in her hands.
 One turned to ten
 One hundred to ten thousand
 Each blade flashing a chilling light,
 In the middle of the air
 They all turned into
 Flying blades ready to kill!
 All aimed for
 Li Nezha
 Hacking in from all four sides,
 So Li Nezha
 Unable to resist
 Hastily fled for his life.
 But now arrived
 Sun Wukong
 The Great Sage Equal to Heaven,
 Who loudly shouted:
 “Fourth Sister Zhang
 You damned hussy you!
 You originally were
 An immortal maiden
 Covered in luxury and glory,
 For what reason
 Did you marry a mortal
 And create such havoc in Bianliang?
 You hurry up
 And come with me

And return to the palaces of heaven,
 To save me from
 Using my gold-hooped staff
 To beat your body into fragments!”
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Loudly shouted:
 “You brazen monkey sprite!
 You dare come
 In front of my face
 To spit out such wild words?
 This very day
 I’ll make sure
 You can’t save your worthless life:
 I’ll flay your monkey skin,
 Pull out your monkey tendons
 And scoop out your monkey heart!”
 Sun Wukong
 Having been reviled this way
 How could he put up with that?
 Pulling out monkey hairs
 He recited magic spells
 And they all took on the shape of monkey gods.
 Each and every one
 Raised in his hands
 The same gold-hooped cudgel,
 Rushing forward
 Each took aim
 At Fourth Sister Zhang with his strokes.
 Once Fourth Sister
 Saw this situation
 With a shake of her body she transformed,
 She transformed herself
 Into thousands of myriads
 Of Fourth Sister body-doubles.
 When Sun Wukong
 Saw that his monkey hairs
 Would be unable to achieve victory,
 He drew in his
 Gold-hooped staff
 And hurriedly tried to escape.
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 With a faint smile
 Reviled him saying: “Monkey,
 This young miss
 Has her own magic object
 To thrash your monkey butt.

When you go back to heaven,
 Go to my father the Jade Emperor
 And there tell him on my behalf:
 Let him issue an edict
 To the emperor on earth
 To care lovingly for the common people;
 Let men and women
 Who love each other
 Never have to suffer separation,
 And may all the Half-City Wangs
 And the Half-City Lis
 Be completely wiped from the earth.
 If my respected kind father
 Will not promise this
 The bond between father and daughter will be cut;
 And if I
 Fight my way to
 The Divine Welkin Hall,
 Within the heavenly palaces
 All the various deities
 Will be completely exterminated.”
 Sun Wukong
 Pulled back men and horses
 And hurriedly made his retreat;
 He went up to heaven
 And before the Jade Emperor
 Transmitted the true state of affairs:
 “Fourth Sister
 Has superior skills
 She’s an expert in each and every art.
 Even this Old Sun
 Who was never defeated
 Was unable to win victory.
 She also wants you
 Jade Emperor
 To protect and safeguard mortal men,
 To ensure that they
 Enjoy the bliss of man and wife
 And enjoy the favor of heaven.”
 Jade Emperor Zhang
 Before he had heard all
 Felt a towering rage blasting upward,
 But the Queen-Mother
 From one side
 With wise words exhorted him:
 “That little wench

Possesses superior skills
 Who will be able to capture her?
 It's your own fault
 For pampering her
 So that she recognizes no authority at all!"
 Jade Emperor Zhang
 Then began to speak:
 "You go and try to persuade her,
 If you persuade her
 To return to heaven
 I will absolve her of any crime."

Now tell that Her Majesty the Queen Mother descended to the mortal world with the other six immortal maidens in order to exhort Fourth Sister to change her mind—but enough about that. Tell instead that Fourth Sister having won victory returned home. Only now did Cui Wenrui understand that she was the fourth daughter of His Majesty the Jade Emperor, and he was extraordinarily elated.

While the two of them were idly chatting, Fourth Sister Zhang suddenly saw that the gate of heaven had been opened and that an auspicious cloud was slowly moving in her direction. Fourth Sister knew that this was her mother coming to persuade her, so she explained the situation to Wenrui. When he heard this, his eyes brimmed over with tears, he found it so hard to part from his wife. Fourth Sister told him: "My darling, don't be so sad! I'll just take you along when I return to heaven today." Having said this, she took out her handkerchief, picked up the soul-capturing bottle and released the heroes and heroines of the Huyan and Yang families, and allowed each and every one of them to return to their homes. She then spread her handkerchief on the floor and gathered the treasure-collecting bowl and the other magic treasures in order to return them to Dragon King's Crown Prince.

Fourth Sister Zhang was just in the midst of packing up these things when Her Majesty the Queen Mother arrived. Fourth Sister went forward and paid her respects to her mother, and then greeted her sisters. After these rituals were over, the Queen Mother began to speak, saying: "You are an immortal maiden from heaven, so how could you marry a mere mortal? This mother of yours for your sake has been forced to bear so much bitterness! If you still remember the debt you owe for my bearing and raising you, come with me to the palaces of heaven. If you refuse to listen to your mother's advice, your father the king will issue his orders, and both mother and daughter will end up as beheaded ghosts!" When Fourth Sister had heard what her mother said, she replied: "It is not that I, your child, don't wish to obey you!" Indeed:

Fourth Sister had gone down on her own from the celestial palace,
 Because she longed for the inexhaustable joys of the human realm.

Fourth Sister Zhang
 Cried out: "Dear Mother
 Please carefully listen to my explanation.
 It is not the case

That I your child
 Had no wish to be filial and obedient.
 I was in that
 Dipper and Buffalo Palace
 Properly but idly sitting,
 When I saw an aggrieved ether
 Rise straight up on high
 To the gate of the Dipper and Buffalo Palace!
 That very moment
 My passion was aroused
 So on my own I descended to the mortal realm.
 Now Cui Wenrui
 Is on no account
 A mere pawn with no name.
 He is originally
 From the upper world
 A divine lad from the immortals.
 He left the heavenly palace
 Arrived in the mortal realm
 And was reborn as a human being.
 This day you,
 My dear old mother
 Have arrived here in person on earth,
 The Cui mother and son
 Should together with us
 Return to the heavenly palaces above!"

The Queen Mother
 Furrowed her brow in thought
 But then put on a welcoming expression,
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Seeing her mother had agreed,
 Was now filled with a limitless joy!

The various female immortals
 After hearing these words
 Together set out on their way;
 Riding auspicious clouds
 They moved through the skies
 And together returned to the palaces in heaven.

Before too long
 They had arrived
 By the banks of Clear Water River.
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Suddenly thought
 It would be good to wash out her stomach and guts.
 But not being careful
 She fell into the river

And soaked all of her clothes,
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 After changing her clothes
 Went to see the Jade Emperor.
 Before too long
 They had arrived at
 The Precious Hall of the Divine Welkin.
 Lifting her head
 She saw her father the Jade Emperor
 Seated high on his heavenly throne.
 She walked forward
 And paid her respects
 To her father who had sired her,
 The August Jade Emperor,
 His fury not yet dissipated
 Showed her a very stern face.
 At this moment
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Felt her heart jumping without cease,
 But the Queen Mother
 Immediately began to speak:
 "You already promised to absolve any crime!"
 When the Jade Emperor
 Saw his darling daughter
 In front of him once again,
 And the Queen Mother
 Reminded him of his promise
 The rage in his heart was already pacified.
 The Jade Emperor
 Opening his mouth asked:
 "Fourth Sister listen clearly to me now:
 Why did you
 All by yourself
 On your own authority leave these palaces of heaven?"
 Fourth Sister Zhang
 Answered her father the emperor:
 With a full confession of her adventures:
 "On that day
 Your child was just sitting
 Right and proper as could be,
 When an aggrieved ether
 Blasted up as high as
 The gate of the Dipper and Buffalo Palace,
 Only then did I leave
 For the world of mortals
 To tie the bonds of matrimony.

Cui Wenrui
 That silly student
 Had suffered his share of bitter pain,
 But he too
 Is from the upper world
 And is a divinity in his own right.”

Now tell that the Jade Emperor asked her: “What manner of upper world divinity is Cui Wenrui?” One of the divinities at his side promptly reported: “Cui Wenrui was originally a golden lad of Laozi’s; his mother is the Auntie in the Moon.” When the Jade Emperor heard this story, he said: “As you both are divinities of the superior world, you should all go back to your own palaces. From now on, without my express permission, no divinity is allowed to descend to the mortal world.” All the divinities there present thanked him for his grace, and they all went back to their own palaces. Indeed:

 All three members of this one family ascended to heaven,
 And each of them returned back to his or her own palace.

Having completed
 This precious scroll
 I leave it to later generations,
 I admonish those in the world
 Whether male or female
 To listen to it very carefully.
 That Wang Qin
 Lusting for riches and sex
 Did not die a good death,
 Magistrate Zhang
 Was executed
 In front of the ornate palace gate.
 Listen to it with your ears
 Remember it in your heart
 Never commit evil deeds;
 On no account
 Consider it an idle tale
 You can ignore and put aside:
 Those who harm others
 Will precisely harm
 None other than themselves,
 In the end
 No reward will be theirs
 Only disasters will come to roost!

The copier of this scroll has had little education,
 Those who read this scroll should keep this in mind.
 There may be many wrong and faulty characters,

So please correct them after you read this scroll.
I had to spend much energy in copying the scroll,
So when reciting this scroll, be very careful of it.